



Nathan Deal
Governor

Bobby Cagle, MSW
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Reg Griffin

404-656-0239

reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov

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DECAL hosting Community Meetings on New Lead Teacher Credentials

New Licensing Rules Requiring Higher Credentials Take Effect December 1, 2012

ATLANTA, Ga., (September 12, 2012) – Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning will host four community meetings this month to discuss new credentials requirements for lead teachers in Georgia child care programs. Beginning December 1, 2012, in addition to a high school diploma or GED, lead teachers in Georgia must have a Technical Certificate of Credit (TCC) from a technical college or a Child Development Associate (CDA) issued by the Council for Professional Recognition, or a comparable credential.

“Research supports that the education and skills of teachers and directors positively impact the preschool experience of Georgia’s youngest learners,” said DECAL Commissioner Bobby Cagle. “It is important that children have the best prepared teachers possible.”

“In talking with providers and teachers, the cost and time required for obtaining this additional educational credential have been concerns, especially in this economy,” said Kay Hellwig, assistant commissioner for Child Care Services. “However, through the Hope Grant, the Pell Grant and DECAL’s Scholarships and Incentives Program, we can help teachers cover most of the cost, as well as provide some additional funds for incidentals, such as gas and babysitters.”

Both Cagle and Hellwig complimented the Technical College System of Georgia and CDA trainers for their cooperation in providing additional course offerings in early childhood education and child development both on site and online in an effort to help meet the new requirements.

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The Community Meetings will be held on **Tuesday, September 18, 2012**, at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro; **Wednesday, September 19, 2012**, at Augusta Technical College in Augusta; **Tuesday, September 25, 2012**, at Macon State College in Macon; and **Thursday, September 27, 2012**, at Atlanta Technical College in Atlanta. Each meeting is scheduled to last from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.

There will be a time to ask questions and make comments. Written comments may be sent in advance to ccsrulerevisions@dec.al.ga.gov.

About Bright from the Start

Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers Georgia's Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program, federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to www.dec.al.ga.gov.